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UNCLAS PANAMA 001014

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SENSITIVE

DEPT. FOR WHA/CEN/BRIGHAM
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SUBJECT: PANAMA RESULTS: MARTIN TORRIJOS IS PRESIDENT

(SBU) In a smashing victory that validated the opinion polls and probably will give him a popular mandate, Martin Torrijos swept to victory in Panama's May 2 national elections. With more than 45% of precincts reporting at 9:00 p.m., Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) standard bearer Torrijos had 47-48% of the vote, followed by Solidarity Party candidate former president Guillermo Endara with 30-31%, and Arnulfista-MOLIRENA-National Liberal candidate Jose Miguel Aleman with 17-18%. Democratic Action Party candidate Ricardo Martinelli was last with 4-5%. Panama's Electoral Tribunal president called Torrijos at 7:40 p.m. local time to tell him that he was the unofficial winner. Aleman and Endara both conceded defeat and both said that Torrijos had won fairly, adding that they would give him their full support. There were isolated allegations of fraud and vote buying in several legislative races, although it may take several days for the charges to be investigated. OAS observer mission chief Moises Benamor told PolOff that he had congratulated the Electoral Tribunal and added that Panama did an excellent job compared with other electoral processes in the region. All newly elected officials will take office on September 1, 2004. Embassy will report comprehensive election results on May 3 by septel.

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